

Yankees, Cowboys and Watergate

Who's to blame for Watergate? The President and his White House Guard? Or, as some critics claim, a bigger, badder scapegoat behind them: the nouveau riche defense contractors, oil men, land speculators, and Syndicate gangsters of the American South and Southwest—the Cowboys?

Reactionary right-wingers, fanatics, “nigger-haters,” and crude capitalists lacking in the moral sensibilities of the older Eastern money, the Cowboys are the bigwigs of the Southern rim—the part of America stretching from Bebe Rebozo's Key Biscayne through John Connally's Texas to Richard Nixon's San Clemente and C. Arnholt Smith's San Diego. They are the conspirators behind the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in the movie *Executive Action*, the money in the Military Industrial Complex, and the sponsors of the break-in at the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee.

As scapegoats go, the Cowboys are nearly perfect. They are defined so loosely that no one knows who's a Cowboy and who's not—from half the country to a cabal of Howard Hughes, Meyer Lansky, and the Teamsters Union. They are economic rather than “just political,” which pleases the vulgar Marxists. They are the source of all evil, which pleases the vulgar Manicheans. And they are the promise that America would be okay in the hands of some equally ill-defined Eastern Establishment, the Yankees.

But the Cowboys don't exist, at least not as they are pictured. For all their oil wells and defense plants, the new money of the sunbelt has never banded together to battle

Wall Street, nor have they dictated national policy—whether in Vietnam or at Watergate. It is perhaps comforting to believe that there's a “split in the ruling class.” But American capitalists are not waging any regional economic war, and believing that they are only blinds us to the real dangers of repression at home and intervention abroad.

The Cowboys were born in the spring of 1968, called into being by Carl Oglesby, past president of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Oglesby wanted the New Left to form “a meaningful relationship to bewildered Kennedy liberals,” arguing that the personal conflict between Robert Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson reflected a deeper, historical cleavage. Behind Kennedy were the Ivy-aristocratic, cosmopolitan, Europe-oriented, more dovish Eastern Establishment. Behind Johnson, the more racist, Asia-first war hawks of the South and Southwest. The Yankees versus the Cowboys.

Oglesby sketched out the idea in the *National Guardian* in April, but his best evidence came that summer. As he told it, he and a handful of other New Left notables had been meeting with the enemy—some high-powered executives from the biggest multinational corporations, led by Eldridge Haynes, president of Business International—a sophisticated corporate information service. The businessmen were desperately unhappy with the war in Vietnam, the threat of a new war against China, racism, poverty, and the hysterical anticommunism of American foreign policy. They feared that the national conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties would leave them with an

by Steve Weissman

unacceptable choice between the "rotten borough politics" of Hubert Humphrey and the "obviously reactionary" stance of Richard Nixon. They favored the "more rational" candidates—Eugene McCarthy and Nelson Rockefeller.

The leftists and the businessmen continued to meet, and as the conventions approached some of the executives made "a vague proposal." They would do "whatever was possible" to help SDS stage a massive demonstration against Humphrey in Chicago and Nixon in Miami. SDS refused the offer, and left to others the leadership of the big Chicago protest. But Oglesby came away convinced that the Yankee Establishment was at war with the new-money Cowboys.

Given the probable ties between Business International and the intelligence community, Oglesby's friends could as easily have been part of a CIA conspiracy to provoke a reluctant SDS into a violent confrontation, justifying a major crackdown on the organization. But whoever the executives spoke for, they did not represent any Yankee Establishment. By summer the majority of big business leaders from all over the country were moving toward Richard Nixon, who was something less than the "obviously reactionary" anticommunist war hawk, especially in regard to China.

The businessmen backed Nixon for good reasons. From the riot in Watts in 1964 to those in Newark and Detroit in 1967, big business leaders had created summer job programs for ghetto youths, organized special funds for ghetto investment, and thrown their support to the Great Society programs of that supposed Cowboy, Lyndon Johnson. They also backed the Urban Coalition, headed by former HEW Secretary John Gardner, now of Common Cause, and committed themselves to bigger public and private spending on housing, education, and a heavily subsidized social-industrial complex. But by the middle of 1968 the same business leaders concluded that spending would spur inflation and further weaken the international standing of the dollar. Inevitably, they chose to cut back social spending, curb wages, raise unemployment, and back the presidential candidate who most favored those domestic priorities—Richard Nixon.

According to available evidence, the top businessmen did not make their decision on the basis of Vietnam policy. Few of them liked the war or its cost; most seemed content with Johnson's March 31, 1968 decision to stop the build-up of American ground forces. But only a handful, if that, were willing to "cut and run." The vast majority wanted to get out of the war without getting out of Vietnam or compromising commitments to the more important Asian dominoes. Humphrey and Nixon agreed, and after the election Nixon committed himself to a "phased withdrawal" of ground troops over a two or three year period, abandoning hope for any "purely military victory." Hardly a Cowboy's call to arms.

Oglesby continued to talk up his Yankees and Cowboys, as did a few other writers and activists around the old SDS. But only after Watergate did the idea catch hold, as everyone from Eric Sevareid of CBS to the underground weeklies scapegoated the upstarts who had stolen the White House, while maintaining "a meaningful relationship" to Eastern good guys like Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, Attorney General Elliot Richardson, and Connecticut Senator Lowell

Weicker. Then came the clincher, an article in the *New York Review of Books* by Kirkpatrick Sale, author of *SDS*. An admirer of Carl Oglesby, Sale explicitly blames Watergate on Nixon's Cowboy cronies.

[WHETHER TO CO-OPT OR CRUSH?]

The more general belief that America's corporate rich had seriously split over Vietnam also continued to gain ground, especially after the Moratorium against the war on October 15, 1969. The key organizers of the nationwide protest, a Boston envelope manufacturer and some former student supporters of Senator Eugene McCarthy, were themselves neither radical nor of the ruling class. They were mostly middle-class liberals with a lot of organizing skill and the gumption to demand an immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Vietnam. But as October 15 drew near, the TV networks and several national newspapers and magazines jumped on the bandwagon, along with over 80 Senators and Congressmen, who endorsed Moratorium Day "as a positive, constructive, non-violent means of protesting the war." Wall Street joined in with its own Moratorium, attended by such notables as former Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric of the Cravath, Swaine, and Moore law firm; John R. Lehman of the Lehman Brothers investment house; and Kennedy family financial adviser Andre Meyers of Lazard Frères.

The top-drawer turnout was impressive. But the Establishmentarians muted the Moratorium's demand for immediate withdrawal and dissociated themselves from the more radical November 13-15 Mobilization in Washington. Most of those in Congress fell back even further, supporting a resolution that applauded President Nixon's efforts to achieve "peace with Justice" in Vietnam—the first major Congressional statement on the war since the 1964 Tonkin Gulf Resolution. The "split" seemed less about Vietnam than about the peace movement—whether to co-opt it, as many of the Establishment doves wanted, or crush it, as the Nixon hawks wanted to do.

When Nixon invaded Cambodia and Ohio National Guardsmen shot four students at Kent State in the spring of 1970, more top-drawer doves turned out, including a flock of Wall Street lawyers. The protest was again anti-radical, turning a militant outpouring on the campuses and in the streets into a polite and unsuccessful effort to pass the McGovern-Hatfield antiwar amendment in the halls of Congress. But whatever the motivations, the split over Vietnam in the ruling class now seemed even deeper.

What was really happening was more interesting. The Business Executives Move for Vietnam Peace (BEM), the most active of the business groups, had been around since the end of 1966, drawing support from all over the country and helping to legitimize the more radical antiwar movement. But even at the time of Cambodia, BEM's sponsors included few executives from *Fortune's* top 500 corporations or top 50 banks. The BEMers were rich, powerful in their own communities, and very decent human beings. But, with few exceptions, they were relatively small change, with little economic interest in America's Asian dominoes and little policy-making influence within the big business community.

(Continued on page 54)

WATERGATE

(From page 40)

A few big businessmen did speak out, to be sure. The chairman of the Bank of America, the chairman of IBM, former Federal Reserve Chairman Marriner Eccles, Washington lawyer and former Defense Secretary Clark Clifford, investor and statesman Averell Harriman all added their voices to the antiwar protest. But they remained individual voices, representing a small minority of big business and no discernible economic or regional alignment. If anything, the greatest tie between some of the name opponents of the war was their leadership in the Democratic Party, which suggests that their motives might have been more narrowly political than economic.

The vast majority of big business leaders remained committed to Nixon and his strategy for winding down the role of American groundtroops in the war. Right at the time of the Cambodian protest, Lyndon Johnson's onetime Commerce Secretary John Connors denounced the invasion before a meeting of the blue-ribbon Business Council. According to the press, 90 percent of his listeners supported the President, and of the 10 percent who did not, several thought Connors wrong to criticize him publicly.

[BEHIND THE MIRAGE]

If the split in the ruling class was a mirage, why did so many people see it as real? One reason is that few businessmen actually applauded the war, except perhaps for the initial boost to the economy in 1964 and 1965. Most found it a necessary and costly evil, as reflected in the on-the-one-hand, on-the-other-hand editorials of the *Wall Street Journal* or the "peace rallies" on the stock market whenever the news suggested that Washington might stop the communists at the conference table rather than on the battlefields.

Another reason was the media, much of which did split with the Administration over the war, and over a lot more. This was especially true of CBS, NBC, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*—the nub of what the Administration called the Eastern Establishment. The term was again

vague and made it sound as if the media were speaking for Eastern Money, or the Yankees. But they were not, and that's not what the Nixon people were trying to imply. This Eastern Establishment was a cultural establishment, and the split with Nixon a part of what sophisticated economic determinists see as a very real superstructure of culture and politics.

"Virtually every element of the Nixon coalition dislikes the Sixties cultural hegemony of the *New York Times*, CBS, Harvard, the Ford Foundation, Norman Mailer, Oh! Calcutta!, and the *Portnoy's Complaint* mongers," explained Kevin Phillips, author of the *Emerging Republican Majority*. The conflict was real. But instead of Cowboy versus Yankee money, it was *Readers Digest* versus *Newsweek*, the Grand Old Opry versus Camelot, and the votes of the middle class of the South and Southwest, as well as the Eastern suburbs, against the "limousine liberals" of Manhattan and Los Angeles.

The cultural establishment didn't think too highly of Nixon in return, and the media did kick him around. Where newsmen had gone along with the government in the past, they grew restive in the last years of the Johnson Administration and widened the credibility gap under Nixon. But this was hardly the Eastern snobbery which both Nixon and Johnson suspected. The media responded almost magically to the charismatic John Connally, while Nixon's number one nemesis Dan Rather of CBS is himself a Texan. More than any cultural bias, or even personal dislike, Nixon and Johnson simply suffered from the erosion of the national consensus, particularly over Vietnam and domestic dissent.

This is especially important in understanding the media's coverage of Watergate, which both Nixon and his more radical critics tend to see as the spearhead of a not-so-secret campaign to oust him from office. But, it was not the media which uncovered most of Watergate. The first inside story of the break-in came from wiretap monitor Alfred Baldwin III, who told his tale to federal prosecutors sometime before October 1972. The story of the money which paid for the break-in came from the Government Accounting Office, an arm of Congress. The

story of the cash payments and offers of executive clemency to the defendants came from James McCord, frightened by the heavy provisional sentence imposed by a conservative Republican judge, "Maximum John" Sirica. The story of the Ellsberg break-in, the enemies list, the Huston Plan, and other White House Horrors came from former counsel John Dean, under pressure from Congressional investigators and fearful that the White House would make him the Watergate scapegoat. Only with Donald Segretti's campaign sabotage and perhaps one or two other stories did the media do more than leak information which government investigators, the Ervin Committee, and the grand juries had unearthed and would later make public themselves. The leaks did create a sense of excitement, and the newsmen did show an obvious bias against Nixon and for Cox and Richardson (as well as for Leon Jaworski, a Cowboy). But for the most part, the media was responding, not initiating, and it is hard to see how anything short of a unified effort to suppress the story could have kept it from becoming a cause célèbre, especially when the credibility gap was already so wide.

Nor is there any evidence that the Watergate coverage or the cultural conflict reflected any deeper economic cleavage, as the Yankee-Cowboy theorists suggest. Many of the Eastern media magnates and managers—like the Paleys of CBS, the Sulzbergers of the *Times*, and Katherine Graham of *Post-Newsweek*—came from Jewish or part-Jewish families, hardly old Yankee, and they were evidently independent of any economic interest groups on Wall Street or anywhere else. The Harriman family, long considered a major behind-the-scenes force in CBS, was Yankee and did control a lot of old money. But that could hardly be the cause of Averell Harriman's politics or Walter Cronkite's bias, since Averell's brother E. Roland Harriman remained a rock-ribbed Republican. Pushing the search for economic explanations even farther, the Trust Department of the Rockefeller family's Chase Manhattan Bank controlled large blocks of stock in all three networks. No one was more Eastern Establishment economically, and the family was the heart and pocketbook

of the old Eastern Internationalist wing of the Republican Party, which had battled with the provincial and isolationist Taft Republicans, whose voting base was chiefly in the Midwest. This split, which was real, was probably the source of Oglesby's idea of a Yankee-Cowboy split. But the Midwesterners had become internationalists as they expanded their stake in overseas trade and investment, and they were hardly nouveau riche Cowboys. In any case, after the failure of Nelson Rockefeller's candidacy, Chase Manhattan Chairman David Rockefeller and Nelson both became staunch backers of Richard Nixon. Why not? Henry Kissinger was their foreign policy adviser.

But East-West, North-South notions should probably be shelved altogether, at least in the case of media. Even in the old Republican Party split, many of the leading Eastern Internationalists came from the heart of the Midwest. Colonel Frank Knox, who brought Republican pro-war sentiment into the Roosevelt government in 1940, ran the *Chicago Daily News*, while the Cowles still run their old family newspapers in Minneapolis and Des Moines. Today, one of the more anti-Nixon papers is the Knight chain's *Herald* in Miami, while the East Coast *Newsday*, which did investigative reporting on Nixon's links to organized crime, belongs to the big-on-Watergate *Los Angeles Times*, which also owns a newspaper in Dallas.

Much of the belief that economic blocs had split over Vietnam stemmed from the liberal attack on the Military Industrial Complex. To the liberal critics, many of them in the media, the MIC was the key cause of bloated defense budgets, hysterical anti-communism, and the war in Vietnam. The military industrialists were the number one bad guys, and they were generally pictured as suntanned executives from aerospace, all profitably paranoid about the commie threat and ready to blow us all to Kingdom Come.

In fact, the computerized Cowboys of aerospace were only a small group among the Merchants of Death. According to the Pentagon's annual lists of the Top 100 Defense Contractors, the key killers included the big four automakers, seven or eight of the in-

ternational oil giants, the top tire and rubber companies, GE, Westinghouse and the consumer electronics people, even Western Union, Eastman Kodak, and Ma Bell (AT&T). All the supposed sheep were goats, and a lot of Eastern goats at that. Far from being a small group on the outskirts of the American economy, the military industrial complex turned out to be the brand names.

The Cowboys didn't even dominate the big aerospace companies, so many of which did have their plants in the sunbelt. The Wall Street bankers and their allies around the country held the financially faltering Lockheed in hock, while the dean of the Harvard Business School and a blue-blood director of CBS sat on the board of directors. Chicago industrialist Henry Crown and his friend Nathan Cummings of Consolidated Food topped General Dynamics, together with the ostensibly antiwar Andre Meyer of Lazard Frères and the partners of Cravath, Swaine, and Moore, who were also active in CBS and *Time-Life*. The East Coast financial community had a tight hold on United Aircraft and Boe-

ing as well, and the leading venture capitalist in several of the smaller firms and also McDonnell Aircraft was Laurence Rockefeller. The military industrial complex turned out to be the cream of the corporate establishment, but the cowboy image lived on.

[IMAGINARY CONFLICTS]

On a more sophisticated level, the Yankee-Cowboy theorists borrowed from the Marxists, most obviously in seeing the economy divided into a series of "financial groups," bringing together key corporations, banks, and families through interlocking directors, common stockholdings, and long-standing financial ties. It was an old idea. Lenin had commented on the Morgan and Rockefeller groups, while the American Marxist Victor Perlo catalogued "several major empires and a series of minor duchies." But the notion got new life in 1969 when the Russians published a new book by S. Menshikov, *Millionaires and Managers*.

A leading Soviet scholar, Menshikov

Pamphlets and Books from UNITED FRONT PRESS

Food Price Blackmail—

Who's Behind the High Cost of Eating

48 pgs. — 12 pgs. comics 50¢

The Energy Crisis—And the REAL Crisis Behind It

48 pgs. 75¢



WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE?

A Photo History of Working Women in the United States



BY THE SAN FRANCISCO WOMEN'S HISTORY GROUP \$1.50

What Have Women Done?

A Photo History of Working Women in the United States

60 pgs. \$1.50

Chinese Working People in America

A Photo History

72 pgs. \$1.50

UNITED FRONT PRESS

P.O. BOX 40099 D

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94140

[415] 647-6727

a non-profit publishing and distribution center

Send for our free catalogue

consulted all of the standard business periodicals and studies. But he also took advantage of having lived in the United States as the son of a Soviet ambassador, using his family ties to gain personal interviews with several of the country's biggest businessmen. This gave his "scientific socialism" the flavor of inside dope, which was especially important in that he never gave the evidence to prove his case.

As Menshikov saw it, financial groups were still a basic building block of the American economy. He discussed Wall Street, including the Morgan, Rockefeller, First National City Bank, and Harriman groups, as well as the older regional alliances in Boston, Cleveland, Chicago and San Francisco. But he also highlighted the newer concentrates of capital, especially those in Texas and California, and suggested that this new provincial bourgeoisie might challenge the financial superiority of the old.

Menshikov said that the new *might* challenge the old; the Yankee-Cowboy theorists assumed that the two were already locked in mortal combat. But along with the vagueness of the two armies the few reported battles seemed like the kind of economic competition that always goes on, but within geographical boundaries and between them. There was even less proof that those within any financial group actually worked together more than with firms outside, and no consideration of the welter of counter examples which suggest that American capital is coming together nationally, not splitting apart. It seemed as though the theorists had started out with real or imagined political conflicts and found some economic conflicts to go along with them.

In the theory, rich Texans were the foes of Wall Street. Back in the 1950s, for example, Texas money joined in the effort to take over the New York Central Railroad. In the 1960s the Murchisons of Texas managed to wrest temporary control of Investors Diversified Services from a group headed by the Woolworth heir, and there was a long simmering feud between Eastern finance and Howard Hughes for control of TWA. One other example might be Texas computer king Ross Perot's purchase of the DuPont Walston brokerage firm, which went under despite

Perot's millions.

But there were few examples of this kind, and even they raised problems for the Yankee-Cowboy theorists. Among Howard Hughes's chief Eastern foes were two firms which worked closely with Nixon's law firm and his administration—Dillon, Read and the Irvine Trust Bank. Nixon's Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans had been president of one of the firms that merged into DuPont Walston, which Perot took over. And even more pointed, when Woolworth heir Kirby regained Investors Diversified from the Murchisons he named Nixon to his board of directors.

More generally, the Texas Cowboys worked in close alliance with Wall Street, especially several predominantly Jewish investment firms—Lazard Frères, Lehman Brothers, Goldman Sachs, Carl M. Loeb, Rhoades, and Kuhn, Loeb. The Cowboys and Jews stood together in the new conglomerates, and as William Domhoff shows in *Fat Cats and Democrats*, they were the key financial groups within the Democratic Party. A symbol of this alliance was Robert B. Anderson, who moved from managing the cattle and oil of the Waggoner estate to Eisenhower's Defense and Treasury Departments to a Wall Street partnership in Loeb, Rhoades. The Harriman group also owned a big chunk of at least one prominent Cowboy corporation, El Paso Natural Gas, which received some favorable rulings from the Nixon Administration.

The theory similarly ignored the historic economic ties between Northern finance and the Old South, the new Northern investments in Florida, the integration of California banks into a system dominated by Wall Street and the like. In fact, a few well chosen examples could show that Wall Street and the Yankees were consistently beating out the Cowboys, but that too would oversimplify the increasing financial integration of all parts of the country.

[GANGSTERS AND DEVILS]

Perhaps the most interesting contribution of the Yankee-Cowboy theory was its treatment of organized crime. In this view, the Syndicate is far more than the old

Sicilian Mafia and has expanded far beyond the older, largely Democratic cities of the North to encompass the legalized gambling of Las Vegas and the Caribbean, the new opium trade from Southeast Asia, and a growing portfolio of more legitimate investments, particularly in the rapidly growing areas of the South and Southwest. This expansion has enlarged the Syndicate's political connections, and its financial resources, both from its own, often cash, profits and through control of other people's money, like the Teamsters' Pension Funds. And, as might be expected, many of these illegitimate capitalists do show up near Richard Nixon and his closest friends, especially in Florida.

The facts spoke for themselves. Nixon's old political crony Murray Chotiner represented a long line of hoodlums, while Charles Colson worked closely with the Teamsters, both in securing Jimmy Hoffa's release from prison and in private law practice. Nixon has also been an honored guest at gambling clubs in the Bahamas. His friends and investment partners Bebe Rebozo and former Senator George Smathers worked alongside Syndicate figures, as did his steady contributors C. Arnholt Smith and Howard Hughes.

But the story could be read the other way as well. The Justice Department prosecuted a large number of gangland figures, especially in the Democratic strongholds, and Nixon downplayed his anticommunism, which the gangsters were supposed to favor. In fact, there was little evidence that the gangsters ever got more than a few favors from the White House, and it was absurd to think that their influence could rival that of the somewhat cleaner capitalists, North and South. It was good that would-be Marxists had discovered crime. But they were bending the facts to suggest that it was more closely tied to Southern capital than to Northern, or they forgot that gangsters are supposed to have exercised great power in earlier administrations, particularly with Harry Truman of the Missouri Pendergast machine.

Normal competition, increased co-operation, few major conflicts, and a sprinkling of crooks everywhere—that's a far better picture of American political economy than the supposed

Yankee-Cowboy conflict. But whatever the evidence, people will continue to believe that the crooks and the Cowboys, the military industrial complex, or some other special group are causing the country's problems. As long as the scapegoats remain shadowy and vague, no one will ever be able to knock them over, and as long as there are devils people can go on believing that some others up there might not be so bad.

A version of this article will appear in Big Brother and the Holding Company, to be published this fall by Ramparts Press.

CENSORSHIP

(From page 28)

Be," a documentary not without flaws. There are a few minor errors of fact; there is an interview with Dr. Ernest Sternglass, whose statistics on radiation and infant mortality have been discredited; and the full presentation of pro-nuclear views was undermined when the AEC abruptly withdrew permission to include interviews with several of its spokesmen. And at times the film suffers from an air of TV glibness.

Nevertheless, "Powers that Be" is an effective and accurate account of the major criticisms leveled against the safety of nuclear power. It emphasizes the dangers of nuclear accidents; the grave and unpredictable risks of radiation in plant operations; and the problem of storing great quantities of intensely radioactive waste products, which remain deadly for tens of thousands of years. The arguments against nuclear reactors are supplied largely by Drs. John Gofman and Arthur Tamplin, both of Berkeley's Lawrence Radiation Laboratories. Congressman Chet Holifield, long-time head of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, dismisses them as "notorious" publicity hounds who have been repudiated by "reputable scientists"; actually the arguments of Gofman and Tamplin are widely accepted and have led to some tightening of AEC radiation standards.

The film then examines clean alternatives to both fossil and nuclear energy sources—geothermal power in California; magnetohydrodynamics, now being explored in the USSR; and tidal power generators operating on

the French coast. It concludes that "we've barely scratched the surface of the nuclear power problem," and that "there are some compelling questions" to answer before we blunder ahead full steam in converting to atomic power.

Clearly, "Powers that Be" does not pretend to be impartial journalism. As Jack Lemmon narrates the film, his anger is at times unmistakable. And Widener, who began the project as an exploration of alternatives to fossil fuels, became increasingly surprised at the absence of any documentaries devoted entirely to nuclear energy, and increasingly appalled at the "cavalier" way in which the nuclear power industry handled the unanswered questions about radiation. Widener became convinced that a truly catastrophic accident was only a matter of time, and that the public needed an antidote to the line promoted by the AEC and the nuclear industry. He administered it on March 17, 1971, to the viewing audience of KNBC-TV.

* * *

The antidote must have tasted bitter over at PG&E, where a counterattack was soon underway. Out of the hour-long documentary, company officials thought they had found a weak spot, a brief segment filmed at their Humboldt County, Calif., nuclear power plant. Widener had interviewed James C. Carroll, supervising steam generation engineer for PG&E, about problems experienced with faulty fuel rods when the plant first opened in the early Sixties. In the segment broadcast, Carroll declined to answer, saying that "it's too lengthy a question." (see box, page 58)

On July 13, Carroll sent an angry letter, apparently reviewed and revised several times by his superiors at PG&E, to Station Manager Robert Howard, at KNBC-TV. He attacked "this 'so-called' documentary [as] the most irresponsible piece of journalism purporting to present a technical subject to a lay audience which I have ever encountered. . . . [It] is replete with half truths, innuendos, and worse." Then Carroll went on to accuse Widener "of a gross breach of journalistic ethics" by secretly taping a pre-interview discussion, during which he was asked about the problem of faulty

fuel rods, and allegedly splicing it into the formal interview. Carroll claimed that, during that informal discussion, he had offered either to 1) say that the charge was untrue or 2) give a five to ten minute explanation of the development of fuel rods. According to Carroll, Widener gave the impression that such an answer would be too long, and he thought the matter would be dropped. When the same question was repeated in the formal interview, Carroll says he offered to supply "the five to ten minute explanation which we had previously discussed." (Carroll summarizes what he would have said, in his letter of complaint to Robert Howard; it takes less than a minute to read aloud.) But to Carroll's shock, the finished documentary made it appear that he had refused to answer a reasonable question—allegedly by splicing in one of his answers out of context.

The year was 1971, and Spiro Agnew was still terrorizing the media with charges of elitist, biased, distorted news coverage. The complaint was so specific that it might have seemed credible—the words of a hapless engineer distorted and used out of

The
**B.S.
Factor**

ARTHUR HERZOG



★★★★★

"It hits
the
jugular."

—Max Lerner

THE B.S. FACTOR

by Arthur Herzog

A provocative—and hilarious—report on fakery and hypocrisy in American communications—from Executalk and Fadthink to Slopstyle and Verbiicide. "Mr. Herzog has diagnosed the sickness brilliantly."

—New York Times

At bookstores, in paperback,
\$1.50

PENGUIN BOOKS INC